



Jose Dominguez is the winner of the first “Smit & Dorlas Latte Art” Competitions

Last week, Smit & Dorlas, two names famous in Holland and Europe for fine coffee since 1825, held their first Coffee Festival culminating in a Latte Art competition conducted at the Radisson Aruba Resort on Friday evening.

Smit & Dorlas was two independent coffee companies that merged in 1978, and are particularly known for the quality of their traditional coffees and teas, a product they established in Aruba in 1991, where instant coffee was most commonly used. In 1998, they became an independent company, Smit & Dorlas Caribbean, sending their employees throughout Europe to train them in the fine of art of coffee as a gourmet beverage.

All during last week, Hans Zevenhek, Quality Director of Smit & Dorlas Caribbean and the world’s top expert on “coffee art” provided seminars for food and beverage personnel of Aruba’s hotels and restaurants, and seven chefs from six establishments participated in the final competition. They were required to demonstrate their skill in creating a standard Cappuccino, Latte Art, and also to introduce their own recipe for a specialty coffee.

The seven participating chefs were Jorge Zarraga of Aqua Grill Restaurant, Shirley Ridderstaat of Divi/Dutch Village, Anthony Britten and Cecille Gibson of Holiday Inn Sunspree Resort, and the three winners in descending order, Jose Dominquez, Banquet Chef at Renaissance, Ruben Maduro of Moomba Beach Bar and Restaurant, and Margarita Rivera of the Occidental Grand Aruba.

The four judges that evaluated their creations were Hans, Ingrid Nicolas-Hose, Director of Smit & Dorlas Caribbean, Fernando Kock, and Alida Martinez, Curator of the Insight Art Gallery, who judged the work for visual artistry.

Contenders had ten minutes only to demonstrate their skill and artistry, and creative drinks had names such as Shirley Ridderstaat’s third place winner, “Taste of a Woman,” a tempting iced coffee. Latte Art included “Coffee of Love,” “Le Breeze Café” and the winner “Jamaican Frappuccino,” a concoction of iced coffee, and coconut cream

Ruben Maduro did not make a fancy, frilly coffee as some would expect, but combined a classic espresso with a lemon and pepper flavored “aquatini” that provides the drinker with a contrast of flavors. “It is not a beverage, but an experience,” he explained, and his originality won him second place.

The Latte Art Competition provided a delightful evening for those that attended, where they were able to sample fine Smit & Dorlas products from several coffee stations placed around the ballroom. Only judges had the privilege of tasting the entries, but it was a night to savor for all those that attended.